

Stamps. The receipts from judicial and non-judicial stamps rank next in importance as a source of revenue. They increased from Rs. 2,27,125 in 1897-98 to Rs. 2,49,428 in 1900-01, and rose still further to Rs. 3,15,975 in 1908-09. More than three-fourths (Rs. 2,48,255) of the receipts in 1908-09 were obtained from the sale of judicial stamps, and in particular of court-fee stamps, which accounted for Rs. 2,28,964; while only Rs. 67,720 were obtained from the sale of non judicial stamps, nearly the whole of this sum being due to the demand for impressed stamps.

Excise The receipts from excise rose from Rs. 1,83,916 in 1897-98 to Rs. 2,29,557 in 1900-01, and further increased in 1908-09 to Rs. 2,53,106, a total lower than for any other district in the Burdwān Division except Bānkurā and Howrah (exclusive of the towns of Howrah and Bally) The net excise revenue in the latter year was Rs. 2,690 per 10,000 of the population (nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ annas per head), as compared with Rs. 2,643 for the Burdwān Division and Rs. 3,191 for the Province

Nearly half of the excise revenue is derived from the receipts from *pachwai* or rice-beer, which amounted to Rs. 1,24,409 in 1908-09, a total higher than in any other district in the Province except Burdwān. This is the favourite drink of the aboriginal races, who regard it as a nutritious food and utilize it as a substitute for a meal. The receipts from the sale of country spirit, prepared by distillation from the flower of the *mahud* tree (*Bassia latifolia*), amounted to Rs. 38,846 in the same year. The manufacture and sale of this spirit were formerly carried on under what is known as the central distillery system, i.e., there was a central distillery at Suri for the supply of the spirit to the whole of the district. In 1907-08 the contract supply system was introduced, i.e., the local manufacture of country spirit has been prohibited, and a contract for the wholesale supply of spirit given out to a firm of distillers. The contractors are forbidden to hold any retail licenses for its sale, but are allowed the use of distillery and warehouse buildings for the storage of liquor. The right of retail vend is disposed of by separate shops, each of which is put up to auction; and the retail vendors are forbidden to sell liquor except at prescribed strengths, for which maximum prices are fixed.

According to the returns for 1908-09, there are 28 shops licensed for the retail sale of country spirit, i.e., one shop to every 62.6 square miles and to every 32,224 persons; in that year the average consumption of the liquor was 8 proof gallons per 1,000 of the population, the incidence of taxation per head of the population being only 8 pies. The consumption of the

fermented liquor known as *tari* is insignificant, bringing in only Rs. 3,294. The total receipts from the sale of country spirit, *tari* and *pachwai* represented an expenditure of Rs. 1,877 per 10,000 of the population, a figure lower than that returned by any district in the Burdwan Division except Bānkurā and Midnapore.

The receipts from opium and hemp drugs account for practically all the remainder of the excise revenue. The greater portion is derived from the duty and license fees on opium, which brought in Rs. 38,995 in 1908-09, representing an expenditure of Rs. 432 per 10,000 of the population, which is less than in any other district in the Burdwan Division except Bānkurā. The demand for *ganja*, i.e., the dried flowering tops of the cultivated female hemp plant (*Cannabis Indica*) and the resinous exudation on it, appears to be greater than in any other district of the division except Bānkurā and Howrah (exclusive of the towns of Howrah and Bally), the duty and license fees realizing Rs. 38,362 in 1908-09, or Rs. 493 per 10,000 of the population.

Road and public works cesses are, as usual, levied at the ~~Census~~ maximum rate of one anna in the rupee; the collections fell from Rs. 1,37,301 in 1897-98 to Rs. 1,33,503 in 1900-01, but increased to Rs. 1,56,358 in 1908-09. The current demand in the latter year was Rs. 1,55,108, of which Rs. 1,38,797 were payable by 2,075 revenue-paying estates, Rs. 4,167 by 396 revenue-free estates, and Rs. 12,136 by 3,073 rent-free and *chauli-dari chākran* lands. Altogether 5,545 estates and 24,760 tenures are assessed to cesses, the number of recorded share-holders being 16,971 and 41,513, respectively.

In 1901-02 the income-tax yielded Rs. 26,328 paid by 922 ^{Income-} ~~assessees~~ ^{tax.} of whom 533 paying Rs. 5,930 had incomes of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000. At that time the minimum income assessable was Rs. 500, but this was raised in 1903 to Rs. 1,000, thereby giving relief to a number of petty traders, money-lenders and clerks; and the number of ~~assessees~~ consequently fell in 1903-04 to 455 and the collections to Rs. 26,711. In 1908-09 the tax yielded Rs. 31,524 paid by 507 ~~assessees~~.

There are six offices for the registration of assurances under ^{Registration-} ~~Act III of 1877.~~ At Suri the District Sub-Registrar deals as usual with the documents presented there, and also assists the District Magistrate, who is *ex-officio* District Registrar, in supervising the proceedings of the Sub-Registrars in charge of the other registration offices. The average number of documents registered annually during the quinquennium ending in 1899

was 21,874, but in the five years ending in 1904 it increased to

OFFICE	Documents registered.	Receipts.		Expenditure.
		Ra	Rs.	
Suri ...	4,950	9,257	5,185	
Bolpur ..	3,044	3,649	2,795	
Dubrajpur ...	4,719	5,567	3,867	
Lābpur ...	4,085	4,657	2,264	
Nalbāti ...	4,400	4,679	3,570	
Rāmpur Hāt	5,178	5,302	3,557	
Total ...	26,856	38,111	20,738	

26,168, the increase being chiefly due to the settlement of resumed *chaukidari* lands. The marginal statement shows the number of documents registered and the receipts and expenditure at each office in 1908. The number of registrations was less than in any

other district in the division except Howrah.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

The staff entertained for the administration of civil justice consists of the District Judge, a Sub-Judge and six Munsifs, of whom one is stationed at Suri, one at Dubrajpur, while two hold their courts at Bolpur and two more at Rāmpur Hāt.

Criminal justice is administered by the District and Sessions Judge, the District Magistrate, and the Deputy and Sub-Deputy Magistrates stationed at Suri and Rāmpur Hāt. The sanctioned staff at Suri consists of the District Magistrate, two Deputy Magistrates of the first class, and one Deputy Magistrate of the second or third class, in addition to the Sub-Deputy Magistrates of the second or third class who are sometimes stationed there. The Subdivisional Officer at Rāmpur Hāt is almost invariably a Magistrate vested with first-class powers, and is usually assisted by a Sub-Deputy Magistrate of the second or third class. Besides these stipendiary Magistrates, there are benches of Honorary Magistrates at Suri and Rāmpur Hāt.

POLICE.

For police purposes the district is divided into nine *thānas* with

Subdivision.	Thana.	Outpost.
Suri	Bolpur	Ilāmbazar.
	Dubrajpur	Khairāol.
	Lābpur
	Sākulpur
	Suri	Mubammad-bazar. Rājnagar. Sainthikā.
Rāmpur Hāt.	Mayāreswar
	Murāral
	Nalbāti
	Rāmpur Hāt

four outposts as shown in the margin. The regular police force consisted in 1908 of a Superintendent, 5 Inspectors, 28 Sub-Inspectors, 26 head-constables and 239 constables, a total force of 299 men, representing one policeman to every

5.8 square miles and to every 3,017 of the population. The rural force for the watch and ward of villages in the interior is composed of 172 *dafadars* and 2,561 *chaukidars*. A large

proportion of the latter were remunerated by service lands known as *chaukidāri chākṛān* till a few years ago, when they were resumed. This system had been in force for a century past and was described as follows in 1866 by Mr. D. J. McNeile in his Report on the Village Watch of Bengal:—

“Village *chaukidārs* are found everywhere throughout the district, and are almost everywhere supported by service lands. There can be no kind of doubt that the present *chaukidārs* are the true modern representatives of the ancient village watchmen of the district, and that at the time of the decennial settlement those watchmen were employed in revenue matters as well as in police duties. In the zamindāri papers of the Birbhūm estate for 1793, *koṭwāl* lands are found in the accounts of one village after another entered under the general head of *bāze zamīn* (or lands free of Government assessment), and no other lands are mentioned which can possibly be indentified with the *jāgīrs* of the present *chaukidārs*. *Kotwāl* was a common name in several districts for a zamindāri messenger or peon; and to this day some of the village police in parts of Murshidābād transferred from Birbhūm are employed by the zamindārs as messengers, and these constitute the very same section of the force which is now maintained by service land tenures in Birbhūm. In 1816, the Magistrate of Birbhūm, in a letter to the Superintendent of police, described the village watch as follows:—This *zūlā* is one of the few which have had the advantage of a regular assignment of lands for the support of a body of village watchmen; and though there may be reason to suppose that part of the original assignment has been resumed, yet the number maintained is very considerable, and would be sufficient for the protection of the district if they were all solely employed in guarding the villages; but it is the more immediate duty of a large proportion of them to collect the revenues and serve as guides and coolies. Besides the quantity of land set apart for each man, which varies considerably, they derive a considerable accession to their maintenance from contributions of grain made by the villagers. The *chaukidārs* are nearly all Doms and Hāris. In a few villages they receive, in addition to their *jāgīrs*, a small remuneration in cash from the zamindār. In most, if not in all, places their subsistence is eked out by contributions of grain collected from the villagers at harvest time.”

There is a district jail at Suri with accommodation (in JAILS. 1908) for 288 prisoners, viz., barracks without separate sleeping accommodation for 216 male convicts, 17 female convicts and 18 under-trial prisoners, cells for 5 male convicts, and a hospital

with 32 beds. The only subsidiary jail is that at Rāmpur Hat, which has accommodation for 15 male and 3 female prisoners. The industries carried on in the district jail are oil-pressing, aloe pounding, weaving of *daris* and *newār*, cane and bamboo work, and wheat-grinding.

CHAPTER XII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

OUTSIDE the municipality at Suri, local affairs are managed by the District Board, which has jurisdiction over the whole district, and by the Local Boards which have been constituted for each subdivision. The District Board is responsible for the administration of public roads, ferries, pounds, dispensaries, education in primary and middle schools, and sanitation. To the Local Boards, which work in subordination to it, has been delegated the administration of small sums allotted for the construction and repair of village roads. DISTRICT BOARD.

The Birbhūm District Board consists of 16 members besides the Chairman, of whom eight are elected by the Local Boards, four are nominated by Government, and four are *ex-officio* members. The returns for 1908-09 show that six of the members were zamindārs, five were Government servants, two were pleaders or mukhtārs, and two more had other occupations, representing 40·0, 33·3 and 13·3 per cent, respectively, of the total number. Exclusive of the opening balance, the total receipts in that year amounted to Rs. 1,40,624, the principal source of revenue being the road cess, which realized Rs. 76,667, as against Rs. 53,563 in 1888-89. Minor items are the receipts from ferries and pounds, which brought in Rs. 824 and Rs. 8,606 respectively. The average incidence of taxation per head was one anna four pies. The total expenditure in the same year was Rs. 1,33,148, the chief items being Rs. 87,078 expended on public works, Rs. 24,656 on education, and Rs. 9,589 on medical relief and sanitation. As regards the different items of expenditure, the District Board maintains 182 miles of metalled roads, and 303 miles of unmetalled roads, besides 172 miles of village tracks, the average cost of repairing which was Rs. 184, Rs. 21 and Rs. 14 per mile, respectively, in 1908-09. It keeps up 3 Middle schools and gives grants-in-aid to 30 Middle schools, 93 Upper Primary, 777 Lower Primary and 53 other schools. It further maintains 2 dispensaries, and aids four others at a total cost in 1908-09 of Rs. 5,061 or 8·3 per cent. of the ordinary income

of the Board; and in order to furnish the villages with water supply, it makes a grant of Rs. 5,000 per annum for sinking wells, etc. The veterinary dispensary at Suri is also maintained by the District Board.

The average income and expenditure of the District Board are shown approximately in the following table under the principal heads:—

<i>Income.</i>		<i>Expenditure.</i>	
	<i>Rs.</i>		<i>Rs.</i>
Road cess receipts	76,000	Civil works	83,000
Civil works (including average yearly Government grant)	20,000	Education	28,000
Education (including school fees and Government grant)	16,000	Medical	8,000
Pounds	8,000	General administration	5,000
Medical (from endowments and subscriptions)	1,500	Veterinary dispensary, bull and stallion, fairs and exhibitions	2,000
Ferries	1,000	Pounds	800
Miscellaneous	500	Miscellaneous	1,300
Total	1,23,000	Total	1,23,000

With reference to this table, it may be stated that the road cess income is ear-marked for expenditure on civil works, and any diversion from it has to be made good from a special grant made by the Commissioner. The latter, which is generally equal to a quarter of the Provincial rates of the district, is chiefly allotted for the construction or improvement of roads and bridges, and for medical and sanitary purposes. The expenditure on education is met from the income from pounds and ferries and from the Government grants assigned for this purpose, supplemented by small receipts from school fees.

LOCAL BOARDS.

Two Local Boards have been established, one for each subdivision. The Sadar or Suri Local Board has eleven members, of whom seven are nominated and four are elected; while the Rāmpur Hāt Local Board has nine members, of whom four are nominated, and five are elected. They do little work beyond managing pounds and ferries and looking after the village roads.

MUNICI- PALITIES. Suri.

At present the only municipality in the district is Suri, which was created in 1876. The area within municipal limits is 2½ square miles with a population of 8,692, of whom 1,612 or 18·54 per cent. are tax-payers. It is administered by 16 Commissioners, of whom eleven are elected, two are nominated and three are *ex-officio* members. The average annual income during the decade ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 11,000, and the average annual expenditure

was Rs. 10,000. In 1908-09 the receipts, excluding the opening balance, amounted to Rs. 16,832, of which the major portion was obtained from a tax on persons assessed at the rate of Re. 1-2 per cent. on incomes exceeding Rs. 30 a month and at the rate of Re. 1 per cent. on incomes up to Rs. 30 a month. This tax yielded Rs. 4,483, and latrine fees Rs. 4,086 in 1908-09. The incidence of taxation was Re. 1-3-8 per head of the population, and the total expenditure in the same year was Rs. 15,536.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDUCATION.

PROGRESS
OF EDUCA-
TION.

DURING the last half century there has been a noticeable diffusion of education in Birbhūm. In the year 1856-57 there were only three Government and aided schools in the whole district, but in 1870-71 their number has risen to 81, the number of pupils increasing in the same period from 247 to 2,810. There were also in the latter year 544 private and unaided schools not under inspection by the Education Department, which, it was estimated, were attended by 7,103 pupils. During Sir George Campbell's administration of Bengal a great expansion of primary education, under a system of village teachers, took place. The result was that at the end of 1872-73 there were in Birbhūm 129 Government and aided schools attended by 4,439 pupils, besides 17 unaided schools attended by 445 pupils, making a total of 146 schools inspected by the department and attended by 4,884 pupils. The subsequent progress of education in the district will be sufficiently demonstrated by the marginal table. No less than

Year.	Institutions.	Pupils.	47·7 per cent. of the total number
1892-03	...	1,009	24,043 of boys of school-going age were
1901-02	...	977	27,668 attending school in 1908-09, and
1908-09	...	1,191	34,822 further proof of the advance made

is afforded by the census statistics, which show that in 1901 15·3 per cent. of the male and 0·4 per cent. of the female population—in all, 7·7 per cent. of the total population—were literate, i.e., able to read and write, whereas in 1881 only 3·2 per cent. of the male and 0·1 per cent. of the female population could satisfy this simple standard.

EDUCA-
TIONAL
STATIS-
TICAL.

Of the 1,191 schools now in existence 1,168, with 34,317 scholars, are public institutions, while only 23, attended by 505 pupils, are private institutions. The public institutions include 53 secondary schools for boys with 5,845 pupils, 1 Secondary school for girls with 35 pupils, 928 Primary schools for boys with 24,904 pupils, 79 Primary schools for girls with 1,225 pupils, and 107 other schools with 2,308 pupils.

The inspecting staff consists of a Deputy Inspector of Schools, two Additional Deputy Inspectors, eight Sub-Inspectors, two Assistant Sub-Inspectors and eight Inspecting Pandits. There is also an Assistant Sub-Inspector of Schools with headquarters at Suri, who inspects Santāl schools in this district as well as in Bānkurā and Midnapore.

There is one college in the district, the Krishna Chandra College at Hetampur, which was founded in the name of her father-in-law by the late Rānī Padmasundari Devi of Hetampur and opened in 1897. The college building is a substantial structure formerly used for the worship of the goddess Saraswati. By a registered trust-deed the late proprietress endowed the college with an annual income of Rs. 6,100 chargeable on certain of her estates in the districts of Birbhūm and the Santāl Parganas. The management of the college is in the hands of a committee, and the staff consists of a Principal and Professors of English, Physics, Mathematics, History and Sanskrit. This college has been recommended by the University for affiliation up to the Intermediate Examination in Arts under the new regulations in English, Bengali, Logic, History, Sanskrit, Mathematics and Physics. The tuition fee is Rs. 3-8 per month, and five free studentships are granted, according to the rules of the college, to deserving candidates in each class. There is a hostel attached to the college under the charge of a resident superintendent.* The college is maintained by the Rājā Bahādur of Hetampur, and the number of students on the rolls on 31st March 1909 was 46.

There are seven High schools in the district, with 1,610 pupils on the rolls in 1908-09, of which one, the Zilā school at Suri, is maintained by Government, and another, the Kirnahar High School, is unaided. The other five schools, which are all aided, are situated at Bandgara, Hetampur, Lābpur, Lakrakunda and Rāmpur Hāt. There used to be another unaided High school at Suri known as the Suri Gadādhār Institution, but this was closed in 1908-09. There are no less than 25 Middle schools (20 aided and 5 unaided) attended by 2,565 boys and 15 girls, and 19 Middle Vernacular schools (three maintained by the District Board, twelve aided and four unaided), at which 1,615 boys and 39 girls are under instruction.

Of the 928 Primary schools for boys, 99 schools with 4,469 pupils, are Upper Primary schools. Four of these are under Government management, being attached to as many Government *guru-training* schools, 94 are aided, and one is unaided.

There are also 829 Lower Primary schools for boys with 20,435 pupils, of which 777 receive aid from public funds and 52 are unaided. Under this head may be mentioned 44 night schools, which are conducted by the teachers of day schools and have no existence apart from the latter.

GIRLS' SCHOOLS.

At the end of 1908-09 altogether 2,985 girls were under instruction, 1,504 reading in boys' schools and 1,481 in girls' schools. The number of the latter is 80, and all but one are Lower Primary schools, 68 being aided and 11 unaided. The one exception is the Middle Vernacular school at Suri, called the Rivers Thomson Girls' School, after a former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The Baptist Zenana Mission (a branch of that at Entally) has recently established a boarding school at Suri for aboriginal or semi-aboriginal girls converted to Christianity, and has rented 4 acres of land to the west of the Circuit House compound for the construction of a building.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS.

Among other schools may be mentioned four *guru*-training schools for the training of village school teachers, and ten Sanskrit *toles*, which have adopted the departmental standard for examinations in Sanskrit. For the advancement of Muhammadan education there is one *madrasa* at Sukrabad and a number of *maktabs*.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

The private schools of the district consist of two Sanskrit *toles*, 14 Korān schools for boys and five for girls, and two other schools. The number of private Korān schools has decreased considerably of late years owing to several of them having adopted the curriculum prescribed by the Education Department.

EDUCATION OF SANTALS.

Special measures are adopted in this district for the encouragement of education among the Santāls, for whom 64 schools have been specially opened. These schools have 1,510 pupils on the rolls, of whom 1,273 are Santāls. An Assistant Sub-Inspector has also been appointed for the inspection of such schools in this district and in the districts of Bānkurā and Midnapore.

LIBRARIES AND NEWS-PAPERS.

There is a public library at Suri started in 1900 and located in the Suri Rām Ranjan Town Hall building. It is maintained from public subscriptions and from contributions made by the District Board and the Suri Municipality. There is also a library attached to the Zilā school, which can be used by the public on payment of subscriptions.

Two Bengali weekly newspapers are printed and published at Suri; one is called the *Birbhūm Barta* and the other the *Birbhūm Hitaishi*. They deal chiefly with matters of local interest. Formerly a monthly magazine, called the *Birbhūmi*, was printed at Kirnahar under the patronage of the local samindars.

CHAPTER XIV.

GAZETTEER

Amdaharā.—A village in the Suri subdivision, situated six miles north-east of Bolpur. It contains a shrine of the goddess **Kangkālī**, to which pilgrims resort, and was formerly the seat of a Munsif's Court (since transferred to Bolpur). Brass utensils of good quality are made in the village.

Bakreswar—A village in the Suri subdivision, situated 12 miles south-west of Suri and a mile south of Tāntipārā. It contains a large group—almost a small city—of temples and a number of sulphurous hot springs, with cold springs in close proximity to them. They all discharge into a rivulet, which runs past them and joins a small stream about 200 yards from the temples. The hot springs are regarded as a manifestation of divine power, and are frequented by barren women and women suffering from miscarriage, who are believed to derive special benefit from diving under a submerged arch in one of the reservoirs. Captain Sherwill found that the temperature of the hottest spring was 162° Fahr. and of the coolest 128° at noon on 28th December 1850, the temperature of the air in shade being 77° while the temperature of the stream above the influence of the hot springs was 83° . From the hottest spring about 120 cubic feet of water per minute were ejected. **Bakreswar** is a popular place of pilgrimage, and at the annual *melā* held on the Sivarātri day and the following seven or eight days over 30,000 people assemble. The following account of the springs and temples by Mr. F. H. B. Skrine, a former Collector of Birbhūm, is interesting as a record of local legends and popular beliefs.

Once upon a time, the renowned sages Subrita and Lomas received an invitation to attend the *sayambar* or marriage rites of **Lakshmi**. On their arrival at the hall of ceremonies Lomas was welcomed first by the attendant host, a slight which his companion resented by incontinently quitting the assembly. So fierce, indeed, was his anger that his limbs assumed ungraceful curves in no less than eight places, whence he took the cognomen of **Astabakra**. Thus disfigured and disconsolate, he wandered till he arrived at **Kāsi** (Benāres) intent on worshipping **Siva**. He was then informed that his prayers could not be

answered till they were offered at an undefined spot named Gupta Kāsi (the hidden Benāres) in the distant realm of Gauṛ (Bengal). Astabakra's pilgrimage therefore took an eastern direction and ended at Bakreswar, where he adored Siva for ten thousand years. The god, touched by the persistence of his votary, declared that those who worshipped Astabakra first and himself afterwards would be vouchsafed an endless store of blessings. Viśvakarmā, the architect of the gods, received a command to erect a temple on the auspicious spot, and a stately shrine soon rose on the eastern shore of the river Bakreswar containing two graven images, the larger of which represented Astabakra.

This shrine still stands to give ocular demonstration of this narrative, though, sooth to say, its appearance would indicate a less remote antiquity and a more common-place origin. It differs neither in size nor other essentials from the temples which swarm in our larger cities, and its style of architecture is decidedly modern. No inscription exists on the central building, but a tablet let into the pediment of an outwork on the north-east records the fact that this portion of the edifice was erected by one Darpanārāyan in the year Śalivāhana 1683, *i.e.*, 1761 A. D. Two other stones inserted in an interior wall east of the temple give the names of two brothers named Hatambar and Taralāsara, and a third bears the date of 1677 Śalivāhana or 1755 A. D., but is otherwise illegible. These annexes are to all appearances as old as Viśvakarmā's alleged handiwork, and it is doubtful if any portion of the buildings, as they stand, dates further back than the commencement of the 18th century. Their purlieus are more interesting. They consist of streets upon streets of miniature fanes, each containing the phallic emblem of Mahadeva in graven stone, erected from time to time by wealthy worshippers. But for their uniformity the impression left on the mind of one threading the labyrinth would be that he was visiting the older portion of some great cemetery, so precisely similar in style and appearance are these smaller temples to the tombs most affected by our predecessors of the 18th century. To the south-west of this curious group are three tanks of various sizes known as the Śhāt Kātālī, the Chandra Sāyer and the Damu Sāyer. Their origin is lost in the mists of time, but the attendant priests aver that they are named after the votaries at whose expense they were excavated. *

Southwards the hot springs, to which this mass of buildings owes its existence, send skyward their clouds of sulphureous vapour. They are eight in number and of varying temperature; that of the hottest, known as the Agni Kunda, is not far

short of 200° Fahr. Each is enclosed in a cistern 10 feet in depth, and of dimensions ranging from a square of 9 feet to a rectangle of 75 by 30 feet. Bathers descend to the healing waters by easy steps, and considerable pains are taken to remove the scum and cleanse these Bethedals from the snakes and frogs which commit suicide in their boiling depths. The origin of the group is detailed with much unction in a palm-leaf chronicle, which is carefully preserved. Siva Hatakakhya, it appears, dwells in Hades (*Pātāl*) and bears on his head the lofty mountain Sumeru, down whose side meanders the sacred river Bhāgī-rathi. Its waters under the influence of Siva's divine virtue (*tej*) are raised to boiling point and force their way to the earth's surface.

Each spring has its individual history. It is told of the Agni Kundu that in ancient times there lived a Rājā named Hiranya Kasyapa, who cherished a deep and lasting hatred for Krishna. His heir-apparent, Prahlād, so far from inheriting his sire's prejudices, became a steadfast worshipper of that divinity, and consequently underwent many cruel chastisements and much obloquy. Krishna at last intervened in favour of his persecuted follower and slew the impious mortal who had braved his ire. But Prahlād had a tender conscience which perpetually accused him of having been a party to the deadly crime of parricide. He therefore went forth on an expiatory pilgrimage, and, successful in his prayers at divers holy places, at length arrived at Bakreswar, where he worshipped Siva, bathed in this spring and obtained salvation.

Of the Brahma Kundu it is related that the god Brahmā looked with lascivious eyes on his daughter, but his sin of thought did not escape Siva's omniscience. He was roundly taken to task and ordered to do penance for his unholy desires. He therefore undertook a pilgrimage to Bakreswar, bathed in this stream, adored Siva and was purged of his crime.

Setganga is called after a Rājā named Set of Mangalkot in the Burdwān district, who attracted Siva's notice by the fervour of his devotion at this shrine, and being desired by the deity to name a wish, prayed that this spring might bear his name, a favour which was graciously accorded. This spring is enclosed in by far the largest basin. It is solidly constructed and was probably excavated by the person after whom it is called. In connection with the Sanbhagya Kundu, the legend tells how Gauri, the daughter of Himālaya, being consumed with a burning passion for Siva, in hopes of propitiating whom she came to Bakreswar, bathed in this stream and adored the object of her love.

The god heard her prayer and promised to espouse her, an undertaking which he subsequently carried out. Of the Sūrjya Kundu it is related that once upon a time the sage Nārada, in the course of his travels, arrived at the foot of Mount Vindhya and there sang the praises of the rival hill of Sumeru. The outraged peak thereupon raised his crest so high as to obscure the rays of the sun. The latter (Sūrjya) in dire distress made a pilgrimage to the banks of this stream, and there implored Siva to restore his vanished light. His entreaty was heard, and the swelling Vindhya forced to subside to his normal altitude.

The legend of the Jiban Kundu is as follows :—In old days there lived an aged couple named Sarva and Charumati, who were pious, virtuous, and as liberal as their narrow means allowed. Being without kith or kin they forsook the world and retired to a forest to worship God in the calm of religious seclusion. But their day dreams were rudely dispelled by the advent of a tiger, which slew and partially devoured the unhappy Sarva. His wife in her grief entreated Siva to restore her husband, and was directed to collect his bones and to wend her way to Bakreswar and plunge them into this spring. She obeyed and was overjoyed to see the mortal remains suddenly endowed with life. The same experiment has since been tried, admittedly without success ; but mothers, whose children die young, bathe in this spring in order to lengthen the days of those with whom they may subsequently be blessed.

The pious fable of the Bhairab Kundu is that the gods Brahmā and Siva had each five faces, a fact which moved the former to assert an equality with the latter. Siva in anger at this presumption tore off one of his matted locks, from which emerged a deity Batuka Bhairab. The new-comer humbly asked wherefore his creator had made him, and was told that it was his duty as a good son to cut off Brahmā's foremost head with his finger. No sooner said than done ; but the amputated head clung tightly to the executioner's finger, and pilgrimages to the uttermost end of Bhārat were powerless to remove this incubus. At last, the unhappy Bhairab arrived at Kāsi, where his prayers were partly effectual. The head dropped off, but a wound remained and refused to heal. Distracted with pain Bhairab began his wanderings anew, and they ended not till he had reached Bakreswar and bathed in the spring which bears his name. Here he also plunged his tortured limb in the Pāp Hars (sin-destroyer), as that portion of the river Bakreswar, which lies eastward of the spring, is styled. These repeated ablutions were effectual in removing the pain and scars.

The legend of Khar Kundu remains to be told, and is the shortest of those current at Bakreswar. In the Satya Yuga the ocean was drunk dry by the sage Maharshi Angasta, and only got back its waters after a prolonged course of bathing and ablutions to Siva on the banks of this spring.

The worship of Bakreswar is directed by about 25 Pāndās, for whose maintenance certain tracts of rent-free land have been assigned by wealthy devotees, whose names they have rather ungratefully forgotten. They also reap a considerable harvest from pilgrims on the occasion of a great annual fair known as the Bakreswar *melā*. This is a movable feast, which commences on the day preceding the Sivarātri in Phalgun (February or March) and lasts for about a week. It is largely frequented by the middle and lower classes of Birbhūm and the surrounding districts, who combine piety and profit by bathing in the Pāp Hara and laying in their annual stock of articles for household use. Their temporal wants are ministered to by a host of tradesmen, who open temporary booths for the sale of stone-ware made at Pattakona in Burdwān, vessels of brass and bell-metal, mats, piece-goods, plantains from Kāṭwā and fancy articles (*monohāri jins*) from Calcutta. A temporary city of thirty or forty thousand inhabitants replaces the jungle interspersed with patches of meagre cultivation, which in ordinary times surrounds this seat of Mahādeva. But the area available is far too small for the motley host that throngs it, and overcrowding, with its train of moral evil and bodily suffering, supervenes.

As to the curative properties of the springs, the Pāndās assert their efficacy for bronchitis, phthisis, diabetes, and nearly every description of skin disease, and quote innumerable cases in which persons afflicted with these and other maladies, too numerous to mention, have found relief in the healing streams. While rejecting their claims to the dignity of a panacea, it is reported that the Bakreswar waters are, in fact, beneficial in cases of chronic bronchitis and skin disease. Moreover, it is said that when, as in many of the springs, sulphur does not exist in too appreciable a quantity, they form a pleasant beverage.

Bhadrapur.—A village in the Rāmpur Hat subdivision, situated on the Brāhmanī, four miles south of the Lohāpur (formerly Nawādā) station of the Azimganj branch line. The village is of historic interest as the famous Nand Kumār (Nuncoomar) lived here. The palace in which he lived may still be seen on the banks of the river, but is now in ruins. A portion is still, however, kept up, as it is occupied by the *Naib* and other servants

of the zamindār of the place, who is known locally as the Kumār. It has an imposing entrance, the outer door being large enough for an elephant with a *howdah* to pass through it. There are two large tanks in the village called Gurusāgar and Rānisāgar, which are said to have been excavated by Nand Kumār and named after his Guru and Rāni. The village also contains a silk factory belonging to the Bengal Silk Company, which employs about 300 hands and has an outwork at Kaytha, a mile to the east of the Takipur railway station.

Bhandirban.—A village in the Suri subdivision, situated six miles north-west of Suri on the right bank of the river Mor. It contains a large temple dedicated to Bhandeswar Mahādeva and another of Gopal or Krishna. The former is a lofty building said to have been erected by Lala Rāmnāth, Diwān of Muhammad-ul-Zamān Khān, Rājā of Birbhūm, at the end of the 18th century. The local legend regarding the image of Gopal is that a hermit came in the course of his wanderings to Bhandirban, and there put down an image of Gopal that he was carrying. When he tried to move it again, he found all his efforts in vain. Since then the image has remained at Bhandirban, and the Goshtāstami has been celebrated every year in honour of Gopāl. This festival takes place in the month of Kartik, when the village is visited by many pilgrims. There is a magnificent tamarind tree in the village, said to be finer than the one in the Suri cemetery, noble tree though that is.

Bhīmgarh.—An old fort in the Suri subdivision, situated six miles south-west of Dubrājpur close to the banks of the river Ajai. The fort has low earthen ramparts, now beaten by the weather into low gentle mounds. The place is attributed to the five Pāndavas, who are said to have stayed here for some time during their exile. Some hollows in the vicinity—the remains, no doubt, of old tanks—are said to have been caused by the daily pouring out at those spots of the water from their boiled rice, surplus *ghī* and sugarcane juice. A tank in the vicinity is named Sonā Chāl Dighi, and is said to have yielded gold, which the Pāndavas washed here—hence the name. The interior of the fort is now cultivated, and people say they occasionally come upon *sal* timber buried underground.

On the south bank of the river, opposite the fort, are a number of small, uninteresting temples, which are also ascribed to the Pāndavas. The five brothers are said to have established five lingams there, which they worshipped; whence the name of the place Pāndareswar. The village lies just on the south bank of the Ajai, and there is a station here of the Ondāl-Sainthiā chord line.

Bhim is said to have set up another lingam on the other side of the river, close to and west of the old fort: this is now known as Bhimeswar, and is enshrined in a small modern temple.*

Birchandrapur—A village in the Mayūreswar thāna of the Rāmpur Hāt subdivision, situated eight miles east of the Mallārpur railway station. The Pāndava brothers are said to have lived in the neighbourhood during their long exile, and the village is a place of pilgrimage at which two large *melās* are held, one during the Rās Jātrā festival in Kārtik and the other at the Dol Jātrā festival in Phalgun. There is an image in this village of a deity called Bānka Rai, which is said to have suffered at the hands of the Muhammadan iconoclast Kālāpāhār.

Near this village is a small village named Garbhābās, which is famous as the birthplace of the great Vaiṣṇavite reformer Nityananda. It is a place of pilgrimage, and a *melā* is held there every year in his honour.

Birsinghpur or Birpur.—A village in the Suri subdivision, situated about six miles north-west of Suri and half a mile from Bhandirban. It contains a temple of Kālī with a stone image, to which an interesting legend attaches. It is said that Kālī was the tutelary goddess of the Bīr Rājās of Nagar, and her image abode in the Kali Dāhā tank at Nagar, where people at times saw her hands and head appear above the water. After Nagar was captured by the Muhammadans, one of them washed a knife covered with cow's blood in it, and the goddess fled from the polluted waters. The northern side of the tank fell down, and the water rushed out like a river in flood until it reached the river Khuskarni. Kālī's image went along with the stream and was found and worshipped at Birsinghpur. Birsinghpur, according to local tradition, is so called after Bir Singh, one of the Hindu Rājās of Bīrbhūm, who either set up an image there or made it his capital or country seat.

Bolpur.—A village in the south-east of the Suri subdivision, with a railway station on the Loop Line of the East Indian Railway. Population (1901) 3,131. The village contains a Munsif's court, charitable dispensary, police thāna, sub-registry office and high school, and is the chief rice-exporting centre in the district. The village of Supur close to Bolpur is said to have been the seat of Rāja Surāt, who made 100,000 sacrifices to Kālī; and it has been suggested that the name Bolpur is derived from *bah* and *pur*, meaning a place of sacrifice.

* Reports, Arch. Surv., Ind., Vol. VIII, pp. 149-50.

At Bhubandāngā, a mile to the west, is a Brāhmo Samāj building known as the Shāntiniketan (i.e., abode of peace) of Bolpur, which is associated with the life of the great Brāhmo leader Devendra Nāth Tagore. It is described as follows by Mr. J. C. Oman in *The Brahmans, Theists and Muslims of India* (1907, pp. 114-15). "To a spot, situated about a mile from the Bolpur station of the East Indian Railway, now known as the Shāntiniketan of Bolpur, Debendra Nāth was wont to retreat in order to hold communion with God, in other words to practise *Yoga*. He used to pitch a tent there and give himself up to religious meditation in the shade of a particular tree. Eventually he secured about six and-a-half acres of land, built a dwelling-house on it, and, later on, a chapel and a *Brāhmavidyālaya* or school. 'The sanctuary or chapel is a marvellous edifice,' says a pious Bengali pilgrim. 'The roof is tiled, but the enclosure is of glass, some painted and some coloured. The Crystal Palace, London, is a glass house. We have not heard of any other house besides it made of glass. Although in magnitude the Shāntiniketan sanctuary cannot be compared with the famous Crystal Palace, it gives the people some idea as to what sort of edifice the latter is. It undoubtedly is an attraction to the villagers, who come to see it in large numbers. This glass hall is about 60 feet long and about 30 feet broad. The pavement is of white marble. There are suitable inscriptions in it in Sanskrit. It has four gates from four sides of the garden. Towards the eastern gate, there is a beautiful portico with a tower over it, and the word *OM* in Bengali, like the figure of the cross in Christian churches, flourishes over the topmost pinnacle. Suitable inscriptions, both in Sanskrit and Bengali, are inscribed on beautiful pedestals for flower vases, and placed at the approach to the holy place. There is a beautiful artificial fountain, which plays on special occasions, and on the two pillars near it are stuck two large pieces of marble, the one bearing an inscription in Sanskrit and the other in Bengali, describing the blessedness of heaven—of which the place assuredly is the foreshadow.'"

"In the chapel described as above by a devout Bengali admirer, religious services are held regularly twice a day, in accordance with the liturgy of the *Adi Brāhman Samāj* by a Brāhman appointed for the purpose. Within the precincts of the Shāntiniketan animal food is interdicted. There is a holy of holies in the sanatory, the spot where Debendra Nāth used to practise *Yoga* under a great *chittim* tree. Here

* From *Unity and the Minister*, 18th October 1901, reproduced in *Tattva-Jedini Patrikā*, Vol. XV, part III.

stands a small elevated seat made of white marble—the *Vedi*—upon which, lost in contemplation, the minister used to hold communion with God. The *Vedi* is deemed so sacred, that no one but the Master has ever presumed to occupy it. The *chittim* tree at Bolpur is in the belief of Debendra Nāth's followers destined to become in after years as famous as the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gayā, which some four-and-twenty centuries ago witnessed Gautama's great temptation and his final triumph over Mara the Evil One."

Debendra Nāth Tagore gave the Sāntiniketan an endowment for the purposes of a hermitage, where all are welcome to spend a few days in peaceful retirement, free of cost, provided that animal food and alcoholic drink are not consumed on the premises. In addition to this endowment, he bequeathed a considerable amount for expenditure by trustees on the up-keep of the institution. There is also at this place a school called the Brahma Bidyalaya, which was founded by the poet Rabinda Nāth Tagore; it is a boarding school, to which both Brahmos and non-Brahmos are admitted. Its object is to impart a sound education in a religious and good moral atmosphere, and it is conducted on the old Hindu ascetic lines, the ideal being "high thinking and plain living;" its standard is up to the matriculation examination of the Calcutta University, to which, however, it is not affiliated.

•**Dubrājpur.**—A village in the Suri subdivision, situated 14 miles south-west of Suri. Though returned as a village, it is practically a large straggling market town with many suburbs, and in 1901 had, with Islāmpur, a population of 6,715 persons. There is a railway station here on the Ondal-Sainthiā branch of the East Indian Railway, situated 380 feet above sea-level, but the village itself is higher. It also contains a Munsif's court, sub-registry office, police thāna, Middle English school, post and telegraph office, and an inspection bungalow. The village, which lies within the zamindāri of the Rājā Bahādur of Hetampur, has been fast rising in importance since the opening of the Ondal-Sainthiā line, and has attracted a considerable trade, especially in rice. The chief local industries are the manufacture of brass and bell-metal articles and ironwork.

Dubrājpur is a picturesque place surrounded by tanks, on the banks of which are numerous tall palm trees. It contains a number of Saiva temples, among which may be mentioned Akhay Dāsi's temple with some interesting carving, and the Sivalaya, a group of five shrines in the Mahtopārā quarter, which is set in the midst of a group of oleanders, the pink bloom of

which looks well against the vermilion-stained friezes. Their foundations and the platform are made of a porous red stone found at Salkunda. The most interesting feature of Dubrajpur, however, is a number of granitic rocks found both in the village and its neighbourhood, which are described as follows by Captain Sherwill:—"Within the town, and immediately to the south of it, large, naked, picturesque masses of granite and gneiss protrude through the soil, occupying altogether about a square mile of space. The granite is grey, composed of glassy quartz, pink and grey felspar, and black mica. In the centre of the mass a large block of granite is seen united with a mass of gneiss. The gneiss is composed of the same materials as the granite, and adheres to it at an angle of 45° . The immediate junction of the two rocks is not perceptible; but six inches in width covers the doubtful belt where the two distinct rocks appear fused together. On one side of the doubtful space the granite is quite distinct, and on the other the gneiss with its perfect stratification. From the summit of the rock, which is about 60 feet high, a good view is obtained of the surrounding country. The Parasnāth mountain is seen at a distance of 75 miles in a south-westerly direction, the Rājmaḥal Hills to the north and the Panchet Hill to the south-west. One of the large hemispherical masses of granite, six feet in height and thirty in circumference, has been covered over with a flat-roofed temple, and a masonry drain built round the block, which is worshipped as Mahādeva. Brāhmans are attached to the temple, and offerings of flowers and Ganges water are made to this extraordinary object of worship."

The first appearance of such rocks as one travels from Suri is at place called Kachujor, where some isolated blocks lie scattered here and there. As Dubrajpur is approached, these blocks appear in large numbers, half buried in the ground, and they are scattered all over Dubrajpur and its precincts, the houses of the villagers being built among them wherever an open space is found. In one place to the south-west of the public offices, and only a few yards away from the roadside, they cluster thickly together and assume much greater dimensions and height, some rising to an altitude of 40 to 55 feet high. Several blocks are placed curiously one upon another at various inclinations resting obliquely on very small contact surfaces. The two most remarkable of these rocks are those known popularly as Māmā and Bhāgina (uncle and nephew), which are perched on a huge boulder some 30 feet high, at what appears a dangerous angle, and rise above it to the height of 16 and 18 feet respectively. A larger block, which is perched on the same huge boulder and raises its head about

five feet higher than the two already mentioned, has a small hollow in it, large enough for a man to take shelter in. A small rudely formed door-frame was placed some 20 years ago on the outer side of the hollow and set in some brick-work by a hermit, who dwelt there for some time. In the vicinity about a dozen blocks rise abruptly to the height of 54 feet. On the highest of these rocks is some circular masonry work, said to have been constructed about forty years ago by the manager of the Hetampur Estate when it was under the Court of Wards. Apparently he intended to have a airy retreat here, the ascent of the rock being effected by a temporary wooden ladder.

At the base of the rocks to the west are the ruins of a temple of Mahādeva under the title of Pahāreswar, i.e., the god of the hill. It is said that the block of stone, which is enshrined here as an emblem of the god, was formerly on the top of one of the rocks, and the people standing at its base used to worship it. There was a natural division between it and the main rock, and one day it tumbled down during a violent storm, crushing a priest to death. The people ascribed the accident to a desire on the part of Siva to have a temple built for him, and accordingly one Sankar Rāj of Dubrājpur erected a shrine over the fallen rock, which is believed to be the image of Siva and is regularly worshipped. Another legend is that when the stone block representing the god was on the top of the rock, a devotee ascended the rock every day to worship him. When he became old and could no longer climb up the rock, the stone block representing Siva dropped down one night. That same night the god appeared to the devotee in a dream and was heard to say: "You have become very old and feel much difficulty in going up the rock, so I have come down that you may worship me without trouble." In front of the temple is another building called Nāt Mandir, which was erected about 50 years ago by one Kenārām Datta of Dubrājpur. It is said that his wife being barren, he offered to raise a temple for Siva if he was blessed with a son. His wish was granted, and he fulfilled his vow by erecting a temple in front of the former one.

The tradition regarding the origin of the rocks as a whole is as follows:—When Rām Chandra, the hero of the Rāmāyana, was about to attack Rāvana, king of Ceylon, he found it necessary to throw a bridge across the straits for the conveyance of his troops. He accordingly drove in his aerial chariot to the Himālayas, picked up what stones he needed, and drove back. As he was passing Dubrājpur, his horses took fright and tilted up the chariot, so that some of the stones fell out.

There is another legend to the effect that they were collected at the command of Siva by Viswakarmā, the artificer of gods, to erect in one night a second Kāsi or Benāres. When he had gathered the rocks and was about to commence work, day dawned, and he was obliged to vanish, not choosing to expose himself to the gaze of the public. There are also legends connected with some of the separate rocks. On one of the boulders a little to the east of the temple of Pahāreswar there is a hollow said to contain water all the year round. In this hollow, it is believed, Sītā once washed her head, and since then the water has been considered sacred. Close by is a place where she is said to have sat down. One of the wheels of her aerial chariot also left its mark on a boulder. Another boulder has a long line running across its surface as if a narrow stream of water had passed over it. Tradition says that it was caused by Rāvana answering a call of nature.

Most of the rocks are very much fractured, splintered and disintegrated as the result of ruin and heat. The whole place is destitute of vegetation, and, except for a few stunted banyans and some scrubby shrubs which have taken root here and there, the rocks are quite bare.

About five miles south-west of Dubrājpur there are the remains of a *garh* or mud fort at Krishnanagar or Kishannagar said to have been built by the Rājā of Rājnagar as a residence for his Rāni. Two miles west of Dubrājpur, there is a large tank called Dantindighi, said to have been excavated by Khagaditya Rājā, who had a palace at the adjoining village of Khagra, which contains a temple of Khageswar Siva. The tank is called Dantindighi, as there is a temple of the goddess Danteswarī on its bank.

Ekchakra.—A village in the Mayūreswar thāna of the Rāmpur Hāt subdivision. Here the five Pandava brothers are said to have taken refuge during their exile, and legend relates that here Bhīm killed a monster named Hirambak and married his sister Hirimba, by whom he begot a son called Ghatotkach, who, as related in the *Mahābhārata*, played a conspicuous part in the battle of Kurukshetra. Another account is that Ekchakra was a tract of country comprising Nimai, Ghordahā, Ganutiā and Kotāsūr, and that Bhīm resided there with his wife and mother. Kotāsūr is said to have been the dwelling place of a monster named Bakāsūr, whom Bhīm slew.

Ganutiā.—A village situated on the north bank of the river Mor, 11 miles east of the Sainthia railway station, in the Mayūreswar thāna of the Rāmpur Hāt subdivision. Population (1901)

407. *Ganutiā* is the centre of the silk industry of Birbhūm, containing a large silk factory of the Bengal Silk Company. The villagers in the neighbourhood are engaged in the rearing of silkworms, the cocoons being either wound off at home or sold to the factory. A factory was first started here in 1786 by Mr. Frushard, of whose fortunes an account has been given in Chapter II. On the death of Mr. Frushard it was taken over by Mr. Cheap, the Commercial Resident, and here he died and was buried in 1828. The estate was then put in charge of Mr. Shakespeare, who acted as Commercial Resident till 1835, when the manufacture of silk by the East India Company ceased. It was afterwards taken over by the Collector, and was managed as a *khās mahāl* till it was bought by the Bengal Silk Company, which carries on the manufacture of silk in the original buildings. The factory of Mr. Frushard, rebuilt several times, still forms the most imposing mercantile edifice in Birbhūm. It is situated on rising ground on the bank of the Mor, defended from the river by buttresses, and surrounded by a high and many-angled wall, enclosing a considerable area.

Garbhābās.—See Birchandrapur.

Hetampur.—A village in the Suri subdivision situated a mile south-east of Dubrajpur and 14 miles south-west of Suri. It contains the residence of Rājā Rām Ranjan Chakravarti Bahādur, the owner of the largest estate (known as the Hetampur Rāj) in the district. The founder of the family was one Muralidhar Chakravarti, a Srotiya Brāhman, whose grandson Itādā Nath amassed a fortune which enabled him to purchase a large property in 1796, apparently on the sale of the estate of the Rājā of Birbhūm's estate. The Rājā Bahādur succeeded to the estate in 1862 at the age of 11, and the estate was under the management of the Court of Wards during his minority. He received the title of Rājā in 1874, and in recognition of his liberality and public spirit during the famine of 1874 was granted the title of Rājā Bahādur in 1877. The village contains a High school, a Sanskrit *toī* and a charitable dispensary maintained by him. There is also a second grade college, similarly maintained by him, which is called the Krishna Chandra College after his father, Krishna Chandra Chakravarti. This is the only college in the district.

Īāmbazar.—A village in the Bolpur thāna of the Suri subdivision, situated 24 miles south of Suri on the bank of the Ajai river, which here forms the boundary between Birbhūm and Burdwān. Population (1901) 1,815. It contains a police

out-post, a post office and a fine inspection bungalow situated in park-like surroundings. The village is a trading centre of some importance, from which three metalled roads radiate, to the Bolpur, Panighar and Dubrájpur railway stations. It is noted for the manufacture of lac ornaments and toys, but this industry has declined, the large lac-producing factories having been closed. A class of people called Nuris still, however, manufacture lac, lac bangles and toys; it is reported that there are now 40 families at work, of which three make toys, the females of the other families dyeing cotton with shellac dye. Formerly tusser silk and cotton weaving were also flourishing industries, but the former is now practically extinct, and the latter has lost much of its importance. A part of the village, near the thana, is still called Tulāpatti from the fact that it used to be the centre of the trade in cotton.

Ilāmbazar was at one time the head-quarters of a large European firm known as Erskine & Co., of which the following account has been prepared from a note contributed by a gentleman of the district. The founder of the firm was Mr David Erskine, who, after working at Surul, set up an indigo factory at Doranda, 6 miles west of the latter place, and, as his business prospered, established another at Ilāmbazar. Other indigo factories were started in Birbhūm, Bankurā and Burdwān, and, after the death of Mr. David Erskine, his sons opened several collieries in those three districts, which were worked by the Birbhūm Coal Co., and subsequently by the New Birbhūm Coal Co. Besides the manufacture of indigo, the firm, which was known as Erskine & Co., took up the manufacture of lac and also acquired zamindāri property. The lac factory and indigo concern at Ilāmbazar were purchased from it by Mr. W. W. Farquharson, a nephew of one of the Erskines, and Mr. Campbell of Tirhut, and the firm started by them continued to carry on business at Ilāmbazar for several years. Several causes operated, however, against its prosperity, *e.g.*, the fall of prices, litigation, mismanagement, etc., and eventually, in 1880, its factories passed into the hands of the Official Assignee, the concern was wound up, and its buildings sold, the Ilāmbazar factory with the residential buildings and out-houses being purchased by Rai Bagula Nanda Mukharji. The building now occupied by the post office was an outhouse, which Government acquired, and the present inspection bungalow was the residence of the Erskine family, in which Mrs. David Erskine lived for some years after her husband's death. To the north of the latter building is the Erskine cemetery.

Jaljol.—A village in the Bolpur thāna of the Suri subdivision containing the temple of Kangkāli. The latter is claimed as one of the 52 *pūths* or sacred places where a part of the dismembered body of Sati fell—in this case the waist (*kāṅkalī*), whence the name.

Kenduli.—A village, also called Kendwa Billa or Jayadeva Kenduli, in the Bolpur thāna of the Suri subdivision, situated on the north bank of the river Ajai, a few miles west of Ilāmbazar and about 22 miles south of Suri. Population (1901) 774. It is renowned as the birth-place of the great Sanskrit poet Jayadeva, who flourished in the 12th century A.D. and composed the well-known *Gīta Gorindā*, a Sanskrit lyrical poem in praise of Rādhikā and Krishna. An annual fair in his honour is held in the village on the last day of the Hindu month *Paus* and the two first days of *Māgh*, corresponding with the middle of January, and is attended by upwards of 50,000 pilgrims, mostly Vaishnavas. The most famous legend connected with the life of Jayadeva is to the effect that one day, when he was writing his poem, he came to a passage in which Krishna had to ask his beloved Rādhikā to place her foot on his head. As a staunch Hindu, he could not persuade himself to write the verse. After thinking over the subject for some hours, he went away to bathe, leaving his writing materials behind him. In the meantime, the god Krishna assumed the form of Jayadeva, and coming to his house, as if after bathing, ate, and then wrote out and completed the verse. Jayadeva's wife, Padmāvatī, then went to eat the food he had left on the plate. When he returned, Jayadeva was astonished to find his wife Padmāvatī eating the food left on the plate, because as a modest wife she never dined before her husband. Padmāvatī, too, was astonished to find her husband returning a second time from bathing. She told him what had happened, and they both went to look at the poem which Jayadeva had been writing and found that the verse which he had composed, but would not venture to write, had been written in its proper place. Husband and wife were thereby convinced that the god himself had come and had written the verse in order to relieve his favoured Jayadeva of his difficulty.

The body of Jayadeva was buried and not burnt after his death, and his tomb is still to be seen at Kenduli, surrounded by beautiful groves and trees. A square piece of stone, said to have been used by Jayadeva as his seat at the time of worship, is preserved in a small hut near the Ajai river. The village also contains a temple of Rādhā Benode, commonly known as Jayadeva's temple, which, according to an inscription on a tablet, was built by the mother of Mahārāja Kīrti Chānd Bahādur of Burdwān, and dedicated to the god in Sakābda

1605, *i.e.*, over 200 years ago. Another temple was also erected by the Mahant of Kenduli a few years ago.

Khustigri.—A village in the Suri subdivision situated 12 miles south of Suri. This village is connected with the life of a Muhammadan saint called Saiyad Shāh Abdullah Kirmāni of Birbhūm. Shāh Abdullah, it is said, when young, left Kirmān in Persia, his native country, and visited Shāh Arzāni, a Muhammadan saint, who died at Patna during the reign of Shāh Jahān in A. H. 1140 or 1630 A. D. Shāh Arzāni directed him to go to Bengal, and on his departure gave him a tooth-pick of *chambeli* wood, telling him to remain at that place where he found the tooth-pick became fresh and green. Shāh Abdullah arrived in Birbhūm, and stayed at Bargāon, near Bhadia, where he performed several miracles (*karāmāt*). But as the tooth-pick remained dry, he went to Khustigri. While in this village he one night put the tooth-pick into his pillow, and on awakening found it was fresh and green. He then planted it, and it soon became a large tree, which is still seen. Shāh Abdullah is especially renowned for the power which he had over serpents, and now-a-days in Birbhūm his name is repeated in formulas of enchantment. His *dargāh* is in the hands of his descendants, and is visited by numerous pilgrims.*

Lābpur.—A village in the Suri subdivision, situated on the Suri-Kātwā road about 7 miles to the east of Ahmadpur railway station. Population (1901) 750. It contains a High English school, a Middle English school, a girls' school, a Sanskrit *tal*, a charitable dispensary, a sub registry office, a police-station and a post-office. The village is regarded as a *puṭhasthān*, *i.e.*, one of the 52 sacred spots on which portions of Sati's dead body fell when dismembered by the discus of Vishnu; it is said to derive its name from the fact that her lips fell here. The most noteworthy building in the village is the temple of the goddess Phullara, attached to which there is an enclosure for feeding jackals, which are regarded with veneration as animals sacred to the goddess. Before presenting rice *bhog* to the goddess, a portion of it is given to the jackals, which are quite tame and advance without hesitation from the adjoining jungle, answering to the call of the name Rupi-Supi. The remainder of the food left by the jackals is taken as *prasād* by Hindus. Near the temple there is a large dried up lake named Daldali, about 300 *bighās* in area, but there is no water in it. It is so called (from *dal-dal*, a quaking quagmire) because if any one stands in any part of it a large portion oscillates.

There is a tradition that this lake was the Devi Daha of the Rāmāyana, from which Rām Chandra got blue lotuses for the worship of Durgā.

Makhdumnagar.—A village in thāna Mayūreswar of the Rampur Hāt subdivision. It contains the tomb of a Muhammadan saint Makhdum Saiyid Shāh Zahir-ud-din, who is said to have flourished in the 16th century and married in one of the families of the Nawābs of Gaur. He is credited with having had the miraculous power of curing all sorts of diseases, and his tomb is frequented by votaries who come for relief from their ailments.

Margrām.—A village in the Rampur Hāt subdivision, situated on the river Dwārka 4 miles east of Rampur Hāt, with which it is connected by a metalled road. It is the largest village in the district and approaches Surī in population, having 6,518 inhabitants in 1901. It is now a purely rural township, but before the opening of the railway was a trading town, owing its importance to the confluence of the Dwarka with the Bhāgirathi. With the adjacent villages of Baswa and Bishnupur, it is the centre of an indigenous silk spinning and weaving industry.

Muhammadbazar.—A village in the Surī subdivision situated 7 miles north-east of Surī. The village contains a post office and police outpost, and has a bi-weekly market. In it are several tanks, old buildings and mosques which point to its past prosperity. At Kharia close by a large cattle market is held. Chalk and lime-stone are quarried in the neighbourhood and largely exported.

Iron works were established here by Mr. D. C. Mackay about 1850 and were carried on till his death some 10 years latter. They were then sold and became the property of a native, who appears to have worked them at long intervals. In September 1874 they passed into the hands of Messrs. Burn & Co., and an account published in 1876 states that they contained a blast furnace capable of producing 5 tons of pig-iron a day, a vertical engine of about 40 horse-power for supplying the blast, a second engine driving two fan blasts for the supply of wind to a couple of cupola furnaces (which used to turn out large quantities of railway chairs), bungalows for the manager and his assistant, blacksmith's shops, workmen's quarters, store godown, etc.* The company, however, made little progress in its attempts to work iron here, and the works, which contained machinery worth a lakh of rupees, have been unused for over 20 years.

* Statistical Reporter, 1876, page 489.

Deochā, a large village about 4 miles north of Muhammad-bazar, also used to be a centre for the manufacture of pig-iron. In 1851-52 there were at Deochā about 30 furnaces at work for the reduction of the ore into pig-iron and as many more for refining it; and when at work each furnace could turn out 20 to 25 maunds of pig-iron weekly.

Murarai—A village in the Rāmpur Hāt subdivision, situated 9 miles north of Nalhāti. Population (1901) 1,071. It contains a police station, an Upper Primary school and a railway station, and it is a centre of the local rice trade.

Nagar or Rājānagar.—A village and head-quarters of a thāna in the Suri subdivision, situated 15 miles west of Suri, with which it is connected by a metalled road. Population (1901) 3,845. It contains a police outpost, post office and inspection bungalow. Historically this place is one of the most interesting in the district, for before the Muhammadan conquest it was the capital of the Hindu Rājas of Birbhūm and later of the Pathān Rājās referred to in Chapter II. Once a place of considerable consequence and note, it has now fallen into decay, and its site is covered by crumbling houses, mouldering mosques, and weed choked tanks. The ancestral palace of the Rājās has almost fallen into ruins, and the family has become impoverished. Their last home was sold for debt in 1888, and in the same year the titular Rājā, Muhammad Johar-ul-Zamān Khān, who succeeded in 1855, died a pauper, leaving his children destitute. North of Nagar and buried in a heavy jungle are the remains of an ancient mud fort said to have been built in the 18th century as a defence against the Marāthās. The chief defence to the town, however, was a great earth-work thus described in Captain Sherwill's Revenue Survey Report of the Birbhūm district:—

“The famous Nagar wall or entrenchment, which was thrown up by one of the Nagar Rājās, extends in an irregular and broken figure around the town for a distance of 32 miles. Its average distance from Nagar is four miles. It is in good preservation to this day (1852), and is not as represented in Arrowsmith's large map of India, a connected entrenchment enclosing the town and the surrounding country. It is merely thrown across the approaches to Nagar, and usually flanks and crosses all the main routes to the town, there being from a quarter of a mile to six miles of the entrenchment on either side of the road. The entrenchment, which was constructed to ward off the attacks of the Marāthās, is from 12 to 18 feet in height with a broad ditch on the outside, formed by digging out the earth for the parapet. Each entrance upon the main roads was guarded by a small

outwork defended by wooden gates supported on stone jambs, the outwork being capable of holding about a hundred soldiers. The embankment itself, as well as a few hundred yards of the country both on the outside and inside of the gateways, is covered with a thick tangled jungle. The whole thing was a foolish and expensive piece of work, as the well-mounted Marāthā had only to ride four or five miles to the flank of the entrenchment, and thus find an easy approach to Nagar. The entrances were all called *ghāts*, and retain their name to this day."

Since the above was written the process of decay has gone on rapidly. The *ghāts* or gateways have ceased to be capable of defence, and many parts of the wall have been washed almost level with the ground by the annual rains. The *ghātdars* who formerly guarded them held their lands rent-free on condition of service as highway *chaukidars* till a few years ago, when their lands were resumed by Government. Captain Sherwill's criticism as to the uselessness of this fortification is of doubtful accuracy. Judging by the condition of the neighbouring country even at the present time, an attempt to out-flank it was most probably rendered futile by impassable forest.

In the village itself is a large artificial tank or lake called Kālī Dāhā with a large tree in the centre surrounded by a wall; it is said to have been excavated by the Hindu Rājās and dedicated to the goddess Kālī. According to the tradition related in the article on Birsinghpur, her image abode there till the tank was polluted by the victorious Muhammadans. It then made its way through the bank to the Pushkarni stream, along which it floated to Birsinghpur. In corroboration of this legend the villagers point to a large temple (now the property of the Burdwān Rāj), a big break in the bank of the tank, and a passage leading to the river. On three sides of the Kālī Dāhā tank there are the ruins of the former palaces of the Muhammadan Rājās of Nagar, which clearly must once have been extensive buildings. In front of the ruins of the Imāmbāra stands a fine mosque in a state of good preservation, which is still used by the local Muhammadans. A little to the south are the ruins of another old mosque called the Motichor Masjid, which had 12 domes, but some have fallen down. It is reported that the brick-work façade in front is of excellent design and that its workmanship is equal if not superior to that of the Sonator Math in Suri town. Among other ruins may be mentioned the Naubatkhānā of the Bir Rājās, as the Hindu Rājās of Nagar were called, the Phulbagān or flower garden, and the burial place of the Muhammadan Rājās.

Nagari.—A village in the Suri subdivision, situated five miles west of Suri. An annual *melā* called Brahmadaitya is held here, the centre of attraction being a tree haunted by the ghost of a Brāhman. It is believed that worship at this spot ensures cure from disease, the fulfilment of a wish, etc.; the particular rite observed by each pilgrim consists of lifting up a handful of earth in one place and dropping it in another.

Nalhāti.—A village in the north-east of the Rāmpur Hāt subdivision. Population (1901) 2,636. It contains a railway station on the Loop line of the East Indian Railway, which forms a junction from which a branch line runs to Azimganj. The village also has a police station, sub-registry office, Middle English school, inspection bungalow, and a charitable dispensary (outdoor), which is maintained by the District Board. The place is a centre of the trade in rice, and has greatly increased in importance during the last 30 years, a new bazar having sprung up round the station half a mile from the old village, while a considerable manufacture of brass and bell-metal ware is carried on. It is traditionally said to have been the capital of a Hindu monarch, Rājā Nala, the ruins of whose palace are still traceable on a hillock close to the town called Nalhāti Zila, where also a sanguinary battle is said to have been fought between the Rājā and the conquering Musalmāns; below the hillock there is a cold spring. According to another and more popular tradition it is so called because the *nala* or throat of Sati fell here when Vishnu cut her off bit by bit from Siva's shoulder. The temple is, however, known as Lalāteswari, and another report states that it was the *lalāt* or forehead that fell here. In any case the village claims to be a *pithasthān*, i.e., one of the 52 places where parts of Sati's body fell.

Nannur.—A village in thāna Sākulpur of the Suri subdivision, situated about 24 miles east of Suri. It is celebrated as being the birth-place of Chandidās, a famous lyric poet of the 14th century. Mr. R. C. Dutt mentions the following traditions regarding his life :—"The traditions current about the life of Chandidās give us some clue to the nature of the rivalry which has ever existed in Bengal between the Vaishnava and Śākta creeds. Chandidās, as his name implies, was by birth a Śākta, i.e., a worshipper of Chandi, Durgā or Sakti, as the goddess is variously called. It is said that in his early youth, Chandidās worshipped an image of Sakti which was called Bishalakshmi, and the poet often addresses the goddess in his works. As may well be imagined, the conversion of Chandidās to Vaishnavism has given rise to many tales. It is said that, on a certain day, he

saw a beautiful flower floating on the river, where he had gone to bathe. He took it up and went to worship Bishalakshmi. The goddess appeared in person, and asked for the flower that she might place it on her head. The worshipper was awe-struck, and enquired what strange virtue the flower could possess, so as to induce the goddess to appear in person, and to wish to keep it on her head, instead of allowing the poet to place it at her feet. The goddess replied: "Foolish child, my master has been worshipped with that flower; it is not fit for my feet; let me hold it on my head." "And who may thy Master be?" enquired the poet. Krishna, was the reply; and from that day the poet exchanged the worship of the goddess for that of Krishna. It is scarcely necessary to add that later Vaishnava writers have taken advantage of Chandidās's conversion to prove the superiority of their deity, and have invented this fable. One thing, however, is plain, namely, that the rivalry between the two creeds has prevailed in Bengal, as elsewhere in India, from remote times.

"Chandidās has immortalized the washerwoman Rāmi in his poems, and numerous are the stories told about their loves. The poet was informed that he could not perform *Sadhan* till he had a fair companion, not by marriage, not for money, but one to whom his heart would be spontaneously drawn at the first sight. Our poet went out in search of such a person, and it was not long before he found one. A washerwoman was washing clothes on the river side, the poet saw her and was fascinated. Day after day he would go to the river side, with a fishing rod as a pretext and sat there, gazing on the woman. Words followed and love ensued, and the poet left his home and parents, and ever afterwards lived with Rāmi, a washerwoman as she was by caste.

"Chandidās was a renowned singer. One day, it is said, he went to a neighbouring village Matipur to sing with his paramour; and when they were returning, the house in which they had taken shelter fell down, and they were both crushed and died in each other's arms. The story has perhaps little foundation in fact."*

Patharchapuri.—A village in thāna Suri of the Suri subdivision. It was the residence of a Muhammadan saint, named Shāh Mahbub, but commonly known as Data Sāhib, who is reported to have died in 1299 B.S., corresponding to 1892 A.D. It is said that he was gifted with miraculous power, and used to cure dangerous diseases by applying ashes or grass; and it is alleged that he could remain under water throughout the year. His tomb in the village is frequented by many votaries.

Phulbera.—A village in the Dubrájpur thána of the Suri subdivision, containing the temple of Danteswarí. This is claimed as one of the 52 *piths* or sacred places where parts of the dismembered body of Satí fell—in this case the teeth (*dánta*): whence the name.

Rājnagar.—See Nagar.

Rāmpur Hāt.—Head-quarters of the subdivision of the same name, situated in $24^{\circ} 10'$ north latitude and $87^{\circ} 47'$ east longitude, on the East Indian Railway. Population (1901) 3,908. The town is prettily situated on the western slope of an undulation, which commands a distant view of the hills of the Santál Parganas, and is a small place of increasing importance. The East Indian Railway have a locomotive depôt here, and a colony of engine drivers and firemen is quartered in a neat little settlement on the east of the line. Further east extending to the main road, which runs north and south, is the native quarter, formerly a mere country village, but now rapidly becoming a small town. The *hāt* or market from which the place takes its name was situated about half a mile south of the town on the main road, but this bazar has gradually spread both along the main road towards the town and also along the road connecting it with the civil station and offices. The town contains the usual public offices found at a subdivisional head-quarters, two Munsifs' courts, a sub-jail, a sub-registry office, a high school, a model girls' school, and a charitable dispensary. It is a trade centre through which much of the commerce of the Santál Parganas passes, and is connected with Dumka by a *pucca* road about 40 miles long.

Rāmpur Hāt Subdivision.—Northern subdivision of the district, lying between $23^{\circ} 52'$ and $24^{\circ} 35'$ N. and between $87^{\circ} 35'$ and $88^{\circ} 2'$ E., with an area of 645 square miles. It is bounded on the east and north-east by the Murshidābād district, on the west and north-west by the Santál Parganas, and on the south by the Suri subdivision. The eastern portion of the subdivision presents the appearance of the ordinary alluvial plains of Lower Bengal. Proceeding towards the west, the ground rises and the surface consists of undulating beds of laterite. It has no hills, but one hillock called Lál Pahāri to the west of Rāmpur Hāt town deserves mention, because most of the old buildings near Rāmpur Hāt and Mallārpur are built of stone quarried from it. There is also a small hillock on which a temple stands at Nalhāti. The soil is generally a light sandy loam requiring heavy manure. This is supplied by the detritus from the wooded uplands in some cases, and sometimes, but rarely, by silt from the rivers. As a rule,

however, the floods only deposit sand, and in consequence long embankments exist in many places.

The largest river of the subdivision is the Mor, which, however, nowhere intersects the subdivision but forms its southern boundary. It first touches upon the subdivision, at its southern corner at Pānchberia (opposite Sainthiā) and takes a winding course in an easterly direction, till at Rāmānagar it enters Murshidābād. The Dwārka enters the subdivision at Mallikpur and passes into the Murshidābād district on the east at Deura. The Brāhmani enters the subdivision at Nārāyanpur and flows to the east passing through the Nalhāti thāna. The Bānsloi enters it at Kalinagar and flows by Palsā into the Bhāgirathi (opposite Jangipur). None of these streams are navigable except by small canoes, and by them only during froshots in the rainy season.

The subdivision was formerly part of Murshidābād and was transferred to Birbhūm in 1873. It comprises the four thānas of Rāmpur Hāt, Mayūreswar, Murarai and Nalhāti. It contains 1,336 villages, and its population was 306,352 in 1901, as compared with 328,025 in 1891, the density of population being 568 persons to the square mile.

Sainthiā.—A village in the Suri subdivision, situated on the Mor river, 11 miles east of Suri. Population (1901) 2,622. There is a railway station here on the Loop line of the East Indian Railway, which is a junction for a branch line to Ondāl. The village is also connected with the town of Suri by a metalled road and is an important trade centre. It contains a post and telegraph office and an inspection bungalow situated on the bank of the river Mor. Sainthiā was formerly an independent outpost, but this was abolished some years ago; since May 1909, however, it has been reconstituted an outpost of the Suri thana.

Supur.—A village in the Suri subdivision, situated six miles west of Bolpur. There was formerly a French factory here which was started in 1768, was abandoned in 1774, and was subsequently reoccupied. In 1787, the Magistrate of Birbhūm ordered the two Frenchmen in charge of it not to hoist the flag of their nation, and sent an Assistant Collector with orders to see it was taken down. Five years later the Magistrate took possession of the factory when war broke out between England and France, and it was subsequently placed under the control of Mr. Cheap, the Commercial Resident.

Tradition relates that Supur was the residence of a Hindu samindār, named Rāja Surat, and there is a lingam here known as Surateswar, which he is said to have worshipped, and ruins of

buildings have been found beneath the surface of the ground. It is further said that he made 100,000 sacrifices to Kāli, the place of sacrifice being therefore called Balipur, the modern Bolpur. He is said to have built a palace in the north west of the village. The legend regarding the Rājā is as follows:—In his young days he was cruel and vicious, but one night he had a dream, which made him abandon his evil courses. He dreamt that he came to a waste place covered with bones and there met the ghosts of all who had suffered at his hands, whether men he had killed or virgins he had outraged. He fled in terror, pursued by the grisly crowd, when a goddess appeared and told him that the only atonement for his sin was a life of virtue. The goddess was Durgā herself, and to appease her, Surat daily offered bloody sacrifices. When he was about to ascend to heaven, the numberless victims he had slain rose from the dead and barred the way. Durgā then appeared and told him that the slaughtered lives called for vengeance, and that he must atone for his crimes before being rewarded for his virtues. At this she vanished, and the victims falling on the Rājā beheaded him. After this he entered heaven in peace.

Other legends attach to the names of Iswar Rai and Bhagwān Rai, two skilful physicians, who settled in the village and gathered a thriving community round them. One of the tanks of Supur commemorates the story of a Kulin girl who married one of their descendants. It is said that she went to this tank to bathe, and, as there was no regular bathing *ghāt*, her ankles and feet were covered with mud. Proud of the alliance with a Kulin family, her father-in-law, Gunapati Rai, ordered a *ghāt* to be constructed, from which a brick-built pathway ran to his house; a portion of this pathway still remains. A less pleasing tradition attaches to what is known as the Jak tank. A descendant of Bhagwān Rai acquired immense wealth, but there was no one to whom it might justly pass. He determined, therefore, to have a boy entombed alive with his treasure, and for that purpose built a spacious mausoleum. He got hold of a fatherless young boy, and on an appointed day led him, after due ceremony, to the tomb in which he had placed his treasure. When the door was about to be shut for ever, the *samindār* asked his victim if there was anything in particular he would like to eat. The boy replied that he would like the first thing he saw in the morning. It so happened that the first thing he saw was a young calf, which he asked the *samindār* to kill and dress for him. As a Hindu, the latter could not comply with this request, and thereupon the disappointed boy invoked terrible curses upon him. The actual spot where the

tomb was raised is forgotten, but the villagers associate it with this tank, and those who live round it believe that at times they can hear the implications of the Jak (Sanskrit *Yaksha*), i.e., the spirit of the dead boy.

Another interesting tradition is told about a pious Goswāmi, named Anand Chānd, who spent his life at Supur, exercising spiritual sway far and wide. At that time the Marāthās were ravaging the country, and having plundered the neighbouring villages and driven out their inhabitants, they marched on Supur. Anand Chānd placed himself at the head of the villagers, who were armed with bill-hooks, which they kept ready for the defence of their homes. The Marāthās surrounded the little force, when to their amazement the Goswāmi appeared in four places at once, mounted on a white charger. Struck with wonder at this miracle, and admiring his courage, the Marāthā leader withdrew and granted him a letter insuring the village against any further attack.

Another miracle ascribed to the Goswāmi is as follows:—A pious Maulvi, who himself had miraculous powers, hearing of the wonders he wrought, came to see him mounted on a tiger. Though his visitor was a Musalmān, the Goswāmi made him sit on his own bed and bade his servant place a *hookah* between them, saying that he recognized no distinctions that were not recognized by heaven. No sooner was this done, than both bed and *hookah* vanished in a flame of fire, and the Maulvi found himself safely sitting on another bed. On his return home, the Maulvi told what had happened, but one of his hearers would not believe. To test the powers of the Goswāmi, this sceptic went to him bringing pieces of beef as presents. As soon as he offered them to Anand Chānd, they were converted into large red lotuses.* Anand Chānd is said to have acquired considerable wealth, because whenever any Vaishnava died without issue, his property passed to the Goswāmi. He is evidently the same as the Anand Chānd referred to in Chapter II as a 'Ghussein' who let some land to the French for a factory in 1768.

Surī.—The principal town and administrative head-quarters of Bīrbhūm district, situated 2 miles south of the Mor river, with a railway station on the Ondal-Sainthiā branch of the East Indian Railway. Population (1901) 8,692, including 6,282 Hindus, 2,312 Muhammadanā, 78 Christians and 30 members of other religions. The town is situated on the eastern slope of a ridge, which runs along the south bank of the Mor, at the point where it subsides into the level country, and apart from its official

* Gura Lal Gupta, *Rare Sketches*, 1896.

status is of small importance. The civil station is picturesquely scattered over a park-like rising ground on the west of the town, which extends along either side of the Dumkā road. This road also passes for a mile through the European quarter, an open undulating neighbourhood, with houses standing far apart, surrounded by extensive grounds and connected by a net-work of broad metalled roads, lined by fine trees. In the centre of the town, along a street crossing this thoroughfare at right angles, is the chief bazar of the place, and round it on the north a small but dense cluster of houses and narrow lanes forms the nucleus of the urban area. With this exception, the houses are scattered and do not extend to any great distance from the high road. The principal streets have masonry drains, but their outlets are generally into some of the tanks, which exist in hundreds in every spare corner of the town. A large part on the east of the town is covered with *pān* gardens and jungle. The houses are generally thatched and built of laterite earth, which after exposure to the air hardens almost to the consistency of stone.

The most noticeable building in the town is a carved brick temple in Sonātor known as the Rās Mancha. It is a fine specimen of the latest class of temple architecture in Bengal, and the carvings over the entrance, which represent almost all the members of the Hindu pantheon, are described by the Archæological Surveyor as being among the best specimens of the kind in the province. The cemetery, which is situated to the south of the Barabāgān, contains a monument to the memory of John Cheap, which records the fact that he entered the Bengal Civil Service in 1782, was for 41 years Commercial Resident in Birbhūm, and died in 1828 in the 62nd year of his age. The site of a summer palace of Bir Rājās, marked by a few grassy mounds, is pointed out in Husainābad near the Collector's residence.

The town contains the usual courts and public offices found at a district head-quarters, a town hall, a public library (opened in 1900), a veterinary dispensary, a charitable dispensary, and the Lady Curson Zanana Hospital. The chief educational institution is the Government Zilā School. An agricultural exhibition called the the Suri Cattle and Produce Show, which was instituted for the improvement of local cattle and vegetable produce, is held in a mango garden, called the Barabāgān, within the municipality every year in January or February and is attended by several thousands.

The chief industry of Suri is the manufacture of palanquins

and furniture. At Alunda, two miles distant from the town striped cotton table covers and bedsheets, towels, white table cloths, mosquito-nets and other coarse cloth are produced. Tusser reeling, tusser weaving and cotton weaving are also carried on in the large village of Kalipur-Karidha, a mile west of Suri. *Basta* (mixed tusser and cotton cloth) said to be in no way inferior to the *basta* of Bhāgalpur is also produced at Karidha.

The name Suri is reported to be a contraction of Sihuri.

Suri Subdivision.—Southern subdivision of the district, lying between 23° 33' and 24° 7' N. and between 87° 10' and 87° 58' E. with an area of 1,107 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the Murshidābād district, the Rāmpur Hat subdivision and the Santāl Parganas; on the east by the Murshidābād and Burdwan districts; on the south by Burdwan; and on the west by Burdwan and the Santāl Parganas. The east and south of the subdivision resemble the alluvial plains of Bengal with occasional patches of laterite and forest, but towards the west and north the ground rises and the surface is marked by undulating uplands of an average height of two to three hundred feet above sea-level, which are often covered by small *sāl* forests. Although deforestation is going on rapidly, the country is still fairly well wooded, *bar* (*Ficus indica*), *pipal* (*Ficus religiosa*), mango, bamboo and *tāl* (*Borassus flabellifer*) being frequently found. One special feature of the subdivision is the number of tanks, with their banks studded with high palm trees, which are found in and about any village of considerable size.

The subdivision is drained by several rivers, streams and rivulets passing over sandy beds or through narrow channels, which are swollen by freshets during the rainy season, but remain almost dry during the rest of the year. Some of these are subject to floods which deposit sand, from which the neighbouring fields are protected by embankments; while in a few the water is stored up after the rains for purposes of irrigation by means of cross dams. The largest of the rivers is the Ajai, which nowhere intersects the subdivision, but forms its southern boundary. A few narrow streams, like the Hinglā, and other minor *nullahs* or rivulets drain a small tract of country to the south into the Ajai. The general slope of the rest of the country is towards the east, and the drainage of the land passes through a number of streams like the Sāl or Kopā, the Bakreswar, the Kanā Nadi, etc., into the Mor, which is the only other river of any size in the subdivision. The Ondāl-Sainthiā Chord line of railway, which has been recently opened, intersects the subdivision from east to west, while the Loop line traverses the eastern portion.

The population was 535,928 in 1901, as against 470,229 in 1891, the density being 484 persons to the square mile. There are 1,981 villages and one town, Suri, the head-quarters. For administrative purposes it is divided into five *thānas*, viz., Bolpur with the Ilāmbazar outpost, Dubrājpur with the Khairāsol outpost, Lāhpur, Sākulpur and Suri with the Muhammad-bazar, Rājnagar and Sainthiā outposts.

Sural.—A village in the south of the Suri subdivision, situated three miles west of Bolpur and about five miles north of the Ajai river. Population (1901) 1,558. The village is noteworthy as having been the site of a commercial residency under Mr. John Cheap, whose work has been described at length in Chapter II. After the East India Company gave up its mercantile dealings in 1835, the residency was abandoned and allowed to fall into decay. The ruins cover the top of a small hill, and though they are becoming every year more difficult to trace, the extent of the original building can still be seen.

Tārāpur.—A village in the Rāmpur Hāt *thāna* of the Rāmpur Hāt subdivision. It is said to be so called because the eye-balls (*tārā*) of Sati fell here. Others say that Tārāpur is not a *pith*, but that the place owes its sanctity to the fact that the sage Basistha here worshipped the goddess Sati in the form of Tārā. The common local opinion, however, is that it is really a *pith* and that Basistha selected this place for worshipping Sati because it was a *pith*. The village contains a temple dedicated to Tārā, the origin of which is accounted for by the following legend, from which again the place is somewhat inconsistently said to derive its name. A man whom business called to Murshidabād, being benighted and overcome by hunger, stopped near a mango grove in a village called Chandipur, situated at the foot of the hillock on which the present temple stands. He lost his way to the village itself, and through fear of ghosts and goblins became insensible. As he was a Śakta (a follower of Sakti), the goddess protected him from the attacks of the jackals and dogs by which the garden was infested, it having been, as it still is, a place for the cremation of bodies (*śhasan*). Now the garden was within the *zemindāri* of Rāni Bhawānī of Putiyā, a lady celebrated for her liberality and piety. The goddess appeared to her in a dream, and directed her to erect a temple near the mango grove in her honour. Within a year the temple was erected and dedicated to the goddess, the name Tārāpur being selected because the traveller, when he recovered his senses in the morning, cried out "Tārā," "Tārā."

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